

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 1 MAY 2005

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League that provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

Bulletin compiled and prepared by Francois ZS6BUU

IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY THE SUFFIX DCC IN ALLOCATED CALL SIGNS EMERGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD MAYORAL CONFERENCE PRETORIA COMBINED HAMNET/SANDEF W/CAPE EXERCISE

HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system.

The National Bulletin at 17H00 CAT on 7,070MHz in the 40M band with a relay on 145,700MHz in the greater Johannesburg area.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

Please note, this bulletin is available for download from the web site of the SARL under the heading "HAMNET".

THE SUFFIX "DCC" IN ALLOCATED HAMNET CALL SIGNS

Listening to Bulletins and Contests over the last few months, and with the knowledge that other HAMNET Provinces are requesting the allocation of dedicated call signs to their area, may I suggest that we use these dedicated call signs purely and only when a genuine emergency is in progress.

My argument, and this is open for discussion, is that the DCC call sign indicating "Disaster Control Centre", should be used only when HAMNET has been activated and is in its full regalia namely handling a genuine emergency situation.

My feeling is that if these call signs are overused, listeners are going to find it difficult to distinguish between a contest, a bulletin, or just a normal chat making use of a dedicated emergency call sign.

Please consider this point when making use of dedicated call signs especially considering that these call signs were designed to keep a specific or dedicated frequency clear in times of a genuine emergency.

EMERGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD

At the time of compiling this bulletin, and having a look at Africa as a continent, again the majority of problems appear to be on our doorstep.

Complex emergencies abound at present starting alphabetically with Angola, Central African Republic, Congo, Ethiopia, Great Lakes (Burundi/Rwanda area), Horn of Africa, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and West Africa.

Current natural disasters are too long to list. I will look only at some of the more severe problems.

We need to start off shore and look at the eruption of the volcano Mount Karthala on the Comoros Islands.

The last time this volcano erupted was in 1977 when molten lava destroyed the village of Singani some 20 kilometres south of Moroni, the capital of the Comoros.

The latest eruption started on the 16th of April and hundreds of villagers at the foot of the 2,360 metre peak, had to flee the area. A volcanologist from the Island of Reunion indicated that all is not over yet. The volcano could erupt again within the next few weeks or even months and a watchful eye should be kept on the mountain for further signs of a pending eruption.

There were floods in the following countries; Madagascar, Horn of Africa, Tanzania, Angola and the Central African countries of Rwanda and Burundi. What is interesting is that a few hundred kilometres away in Djibouti, they are suffering a severe drought.

The deaths associated with the Marburg Virus outbreak in Angola is on the decline but still a cause for concern.

I did not delve deeper into other problems around the world as most seem to be associated with Africa.

A reminder to all of us that winter is fast approaching and with winter comes severe cold, snow and possibly floods in the Western Cape. Let's be prepared for such events.

MAYORAL CONFERENCE PRETORIA

It is early days yet, but there is a major Mayoral Conference taking place in Pretoria on the 15th and 16th of May and HAMNET have offered to be available for emergency communication.

Plans at this stage are still sketchy but we will probably be operating out of Kempton Park, Pretoria and one or two other mobile stations. A report back will be discussed should this exercise take place.

EXERCISE “DOUBLE BARREL”

Operation or exercise double barrel will be taking place over a period of 3 days from 13 to 15 May in the Western Cape area.

The driving force behind this exercise is Pierre Tromp, ZR1PDT who has spent a lot of time to organise this event and my thanks to a well planned operation which will take place on Saturday the 14th of May.

The scenario is an earthquake in the Boland Region, which has had a quake before and is on a fault. This exercise will for the first time be a combination of HAMNET, SANDF and EMS of various towns in the area.

I will also be participating by way of listening from base up here in Johannesburg and I have extended an invitation to Arthur Bradshaw and Charles Norval to attend if they are not too busy that Saturday, to come and see for themselves how thing progress.

May I respectfully request that we keep the frequencies where this exercise will take place, clear of normal conversation. We will often make it known that “this is just an exercise” and that listeners should not assume that a genuine disaster has taken place.

We will also be using our official call signs namely DCC plus a few other dedicated call signs allocated to the Western Cape Should there be no QRM, the frequencies to be used will obviously be our preferred emergency frequencies plus others, namely 3,650MHz, 3,695MHz, 7,070MHz, 10.130MHz and 14,225MHz in the 20M band for this specific exercise. In the Boland, the 2M frequencies will be various repeaters in the area plus a selection of simplex frequencies.

We sincerely hope that this exercise will go off well and took forward to the debriefing report at a later stage.

FINAL COMMENT

May I again, to all who are not HAMNET members, very respectfully request that you don t use 7,070MHz frequency as a “tuning up” “whistling”, “blowing”, “hola hola” and “scratching your microphone” frequency to check your antenna SWR, impedance or resonance!

7,070MHz just happens to be in the middle of the 40 metre band but I am sure there are many other frequencies you could tune up your rig-cum-antenna tuner.

7,070MHz is the preferred “Emergency Communication Frequency” in the forty metre band. We, as HAMNET, have “no right” to this frequency, but your indulgence, understanding and respect for what we as HAMNET members do for the community, will be appreciated!

May I suggest a “dummy-load” to tune up your rig!

I know disasters are few and far between in our beloved country, but please have a little respect for those, like myself, who listen as often as we can on 7,070MHz for traffic. It becomes a bit painful at times to listen to all the shenanigans being perpetrated on this specific frequency!

One final final comment.

I had a meeting with my SARL Councillor, Graham Hartlett on Tuesday to discuss various HAMNET issues. He indicated that one of my HAMNET members “demanded a reply to an e-mail” within 48 hours regarding something or other to do with HAMNET.

Graham did not divulge the name of the sender.

Should there be any complaints regarding me, or the way I run HAMNET, my telephone number is 011 6795260, or 083 585 3847, zs6buu@uskonet.com

I welcome constructive criticism, suggestions and ideas.

By all means, cc the President of any e-mail sent to me. At least Graham is then also aware of a problem, but I would personally always like to be the first to know.

That is all for today.

Bulletin ends.